

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #2958/01 2582124
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 152124Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0643
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 9149
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2899
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP LIMA 0075
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 4338
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 0073
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4959
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 002958

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2019
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KJUS](#) [PREL](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP TARGETED
IN SPYING SCANDAL

REF: A. BOGOTA 2019
[1](#)B. BOGOTA 2872
[1](#)C. BOGOTA 2921

Classified By: Ambassador William R. Brownfield, Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Ambassador Brownfield visited the prominent Colombian human rights NGO, the Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ) on September 4 to launch the Embassy's new human rights strategy. CCJ Director Gustavo Gallon attributed responsibility for illegal intelligence collection by the Administrative Department of Security (DAS) and other intelligence groups to the "highest levels." Gallon expressed frustration over the perceived lack of access to 14 extradited paramilitary leaders participating in the Justice and Peace Process (JPP). The Ambassador replied that he believed both U.S. and Colombian justice could be served--but agreed that the current system requires improvements. Press coverage focused on the recent wiretapping of a USG official, but the Ambassador's strong human rights message did receive some national play. End Summary

CCJ FIRST NGO MEETING TO INCLUDE PRESS COMPONENT

[1](#)2. (U) Ambassador Brownfield called on Gustavo Gallon, Director of the Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ), on September 4 to launch the Embassy's new human rights strategy (SEPTEL). The Ambassador informed Gallon that although he had already met with many human rights organizations, he now planned to initiate formal monthly visits to NGOs and incorporate a press component in order to send a strong and unequivocal signal on the USG's support for human rights defenders. Gallon thanked the Ambassador for his support and credited the State Department's Annual Human Rights Report with legitimizing the work of human rights defenders in Colombia.

ILLEGAL INTELLIGENCE STIGMATIZES HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

[1](#)3. (C) Gallon informed the Ambassador he was one of the principal targets of the Administrative Department of

Security's (DAS) illegal surveillance (REF A). He said the spying included compiling information on his minor children, renting an apartment near his home to maintain constant surveillance of him and his family, and even lengthy reporting on his comments at public conferences. Gallon suggested the problem extended "far beyond" DAS and pointed to illegitimate intelligence collection--frequently used illegally in judicial cases against human rights defenders--by other intelligence agencies including the Colombian military and police. He alleged part of the strategy involved sharing politically motivated intelligence with other countries to prevent certain defenders--particularly those managing human rights cases before international courts--from access to foreign, especially American, visas. He said this kind of "offensive intelligence" was clearly "GOC policy" and suggested the decision was made "at the highest level."

CONCERNS OVER ACCESS TO EXTRADITED PARAMILITARY LEADERS

¶4. (C) Gallon expressed concern over limited access to the 14 extradited former paramilitary leaders still participating in the Justice and Peace process (JPP). He recommended they be temporarily returned to Colombia to complete their JPP voluntary confessions. The Ambassador noted that when the GOC had decided to extradite the former paramilitary leaders, he had personally assured the GOC that 1) the USG would ensure Colombian judicial authorities had access to the extraditees and 2) federal prosecutors would be encouraged to

take ongoing participation in the JPP into account when developing plea bargain agreements and making sentencing recommendations. He expressed confidence in the ability to process the extradited former paramilitaries under both the U.S. legal system and the JPP, but acknowledged the current system is not meeting the needs of Colombian authorities and victims. The Ambassador outlined possible solutions, such as assigning a Colombian magistrate to the Colombian Embassy in the United States or additional staff on the USG side to facilitate judicial requests for access to the extraditees.

OPPOSITION TO FURTHER "MILITARIZATION"

¶5. (C) Gallon conveyed his opposition to the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA), citing concerns of "militarization" of the region and impunity for USG military personnel. The Ambassador indicated that the collaboration defined under the DCA could have been implemented under current bilateral agreements, but that the language in the former agreements--which date back to the 1950s--was even more complicated on immunity.

PRESS COVERAGE FOCUSES ON WIRETAPPING OF USG OFFICIAL, BUT MESSAGE GETS OUT

¶6. (U) Following the meeting, the Ambassador and Gallon addressed the media. The Ambassador gave brief remarks stating "human rights organizations play an essential role in any democratic society, whether the United States, Colombia, or any country in the world." The Ambassador took questions on the DAS wiretapping scandal, the "No Mas Chavez" march (REF B), and regional relations. Print, TV, and radio outlets covered the press encounter, but largely focused their coverage on the wiretapping of a Department of Justice Embassy official (REF C) rather than the Ambassador's statement on human rights. Still, national outlets including El Tiempo (leading national newspaper, 1.4 million readers), Telepais (national TV news program, estimated 507,000 viewers), CM& (national TV news program, est. 507,000 viewers), Caracol TV (leading national TV channel, estimated 8.3 million viewers), RCN Radio (leading national radio station, 337,000 listeners) ran stories and most covered the Ambassador's human rights comments. The Embassy issued a press release and quoted the Ambassador's remarks on human rights defenders. Gallon's remarks included a criticism of

the DCA, but received no national coverage.
Brownfield